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Summary of the Eleventh Session of the World Urban Forum: 26-30 June 2022

“We only have 2,743 days left to implement the New Urban Agenda and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.” UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif’s motto during the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum (WUF11) reflected the feeling of many participants that fast action is needed for cities to recover from multiple crises and embark on a rapid transition towards sustainable urban development. The “triple C crises” of COVID-19 pandemic, climate disasters, and emerging conflicts are converging on cities, pushing already marginalized populations further into poverty. Against this backdrop, many participants agreed that the world’s race towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be decided in cities, and it will be decided soon.

The major WUF11 themes included the challenges of providing affordable, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient housing, and how to finance it; the need to improve stakeholder engagement in urban planning and to co-create sustainable and resilient cities, as well as the approaches and mechanisms to achieve it; and using smart technologies and other tools to prepare cities for future crises, while putting people first.

The Forum was lauded for its efforts towards accessibility, with full interpretation in international and Polish sign language, and numerous improvements for the visually and physically impaired. Organized as a hybrid event by UN-Habitat, the Polish Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, and the Municipal Office of Katowice, WUF11 took place in Katowice, Poland, from 25-30 June 2022. The event attracted a total of 17,003 attendees, with 10,799 participants from 155 countries attending in person. Approximately three-quarters of the gender-balanced participants came from Europe, while participants for Africa and Asia accounted for 7.5% and 8.7% respectively.

A Brief History of the World Urban Forum, UN-Habitat, and Human Settlement Issues

UN-Habitat organizes and runs the World Urban Forum (WUF) every second year as the world’s leading gathering on urban issues. Each session of the Forum focuses on the objectives of:

- Raising awareness of sustainable urbanization among stakeholders and constituencies, including the general public;

- Improving the collective knowledge of sustainable urban development through inclusive open debates, the sharing of lessons learned, and the exchange of best practices and good policies; and
- Increasing coordination and cooperation between different stakeholders and constituencies for the advancement and implementation of sustainable urbanization.

Origins of the Process

In 1976, the first UN Conference on Human Settlements adopted the Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements, which officially established the UN Centre for Human Settlements as the major UN agency mandated by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to pursue the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. In December 2001, UNGA adopted resolution 56/206 transforming the UN Centre for Human Settlements into UN-Habitat.

In the same resolution, UNGA established the WUF as a “non-legislative technical forum in which experts can exchange views in the years when the UN-Habitat Governing Council does not meet.” The WUF provides opportunities for debate and discussion about the challenges of urbanization and operates as an open-ended think tank.

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The WUF aims to further advance the outcomes of several UN conferences on sustainable development, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs, and the New Urban Agenda (NUA), which was adopted at the Habitat III conference in Ecuador in 2016.

Key Turning Points and Linkages with Other Processes

The UN Conference on Environment and Development

(UNCED): UNCED, also known as the Earth Summit, took place from 3-14 June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The principal outputs of UNCED were the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 (a 40-chapter programme of action), and the Statement of Forest Principles. Agenda 21 acknowledged rapid urbanization, noting the increase in the size and number of cities, “call[ing] for greater attention to issues of local government and municipal management,” and highlighting that if cities are properly managed, they can “develop the capacity to sustain their productivity, improve the living conditions of their residents and manage natural resources in a sustainable way.”

World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD): The WSSD took place in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002. The conference reviewed progress achieved towards UNCED commitments and adopted the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, which, among other actions, called for achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. It also urged action at all levels to: improve access to land and property and provide adequate shelter and basic services for the urban and rural poor; increase decent employment, credit, and income; remove unnecessary regulation and other obstacles for microenterprises and the informal sector; and support slum upgrading programmes within urban development plans.

UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20):

The third and final meeting of the Preparatory Committee for Rio+20, pre-conference informal consultations, and Rio+20 convened back-to-back in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 13-22 June 2012. During those ten days, government delegations concluded negotiations on the Rio outcome document, “The Future We Want,” and held, an Urban Summit that involved roundtables on, *inter alia*, multi-level governance and how cities across the world can learn from each other. Governments also agreed to launch a process to develop a set of SDGs, and to establish a High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) to follow up on implementation of sustainable development.

2030 Agenda: In September 2015, the UN Sustainable Development Summit adopted “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” a package that includes the 17 SDGs, 169 targets, and a framework for follow-up and review of implementation. SDG 11 calls on countries to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable,” with specific targets on, among other issues:

- Access for all to adequate, safe, and affordable housing and basic services and upgrading slums;
- Sustainable transport systems for all;
- Sustainable urbanization;
- Reducing deaths and economic losses caused by disasters;

- Reducing the per capita environmental impact; and
- Universal access to urban green spaces.

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable

Development: The 67th session of UNGA adopted resolution 67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the HLPF on 9 July 2013. It decided that the HLPF, consistent with its intergovernmental, universal character, will provide political leadership, guidance, and recommendations for sustainable development and will follow up and review progress on the implementation of sustainable development commitments. Seven HLPF sessions have convened, the first in September 2013 and subsequent sessions in July each year at UN Headquarters in New York, US. The HLPF has a system of Voluntary National Reviews in which countries present their progress towards the SDGs, and a global review of selected SDGs is conducted each year. SDG 11 on sustainable cities was reviewed at the HLPF in 2018.

UN-Habitat Conferences: UN-Habitat conferences take place every 20 years. UNGA convened Habitat I in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976. The conference recognized that shelter and urbanization are global issues to be addressed collectively and created the UN Centre for Human Settlements.

Habitat II convened from 3-14 June 1996 in Istanbul, Turkey. The Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, adopted by 171 governments during the Conference, outlined more than 100 commitments and strategies to address shelter and sustainable human settlements, emphasizing the themes of partnership and local action. The Habitat Agenda set the twin goals of achieving adequate shelter for all and the sustainable development of human settlements. The Conference also reaffirmed its commitment to the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing.

Habitat III took place from 17-20 October 2016 in Quito, Ecuador. Habitat III adopted the NUA, a global, non-binding agenda for making cities safe, sustainable, and resilient.

Habitat III proposed to hold the fourth UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat IV) in 2036.

New Urban Agenda: The NUA, adopted at Habitat III, aligns with many of the SDGs, including SDG 11 on making cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. In preambular text, the NUA sets out aims to end poverty and hunger (SDGs 1 and 2), reduce inequalities (SDG 10), promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth (SDG 8), achieve gender equality (SDG 5), improve human health and wellbeing (SDG 4), foster resilience (SDGs 11 and 13), and protect the environment (SDGs 6, 9, 13, 14, and 15). The Agenda promotes a vision for cities that is grounded in human rights and recognizes the need to give particular attention to addressing multiple forms of discrimination, including discrimination against people in slum settlements, homeless people, internally displaced persons, and migrants, regardless of their migration status.

The “Quito Implementation Plan for the New Urban Agenda” comprises three sections: transformative commitments for sustainable urban development; effective implementation; and follow-up and review. The section on implementation emphasizes

the need for establishing strong urban governance structures, planning and managing urban spatial development, and accessing means of implementation.

The UN Secretary-General reports on implementation of the NUA every four years, with the first report submitted during UNGA's 72nd session (2017-2018).

World Urban Forum: WUF1 took place from 29 April to 3 May 2002 in Nairobi, Kenya, on the theme of sustainable urbanization, and discussions focused on: the effect of HIV/AIDS on human settlements; violence against women; basic services and infrastructure, including provision of water and sanitation; and the need for secure tenure. Subsequently, WUF sessions have been held every two years with themes ranging from “Sustainable Cities: Turning Ideas into Action” to “Implementing the New Urban Agenda.” WUF sessions have previously convened in: Barcelona, Spain; Vancouver, Canada; Nanjing, China; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Naples, Italy; Medellín, Colombia; and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

WUF10 convened from 8-13 February 2020 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, under the theme, “Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation.” The meeting adopted the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions reflecting delegates’ perspectives on the relationship between culture, innovation, and urban development.

Summaries of ENB coverage of UN-Habitat conferences and WUF meetings can be found at: enb.iisd.org/negotiations/un-conference-human-settlements-habitat

Report of the Eleventh Session of the World Urban Forum

WUF11 began on Sunday, 26 June 2022, with the convening of the WUF assemblies of major stakeholder groups. The official opening took place on Monday, 27 June. Throughout the Forum, participants convened in dialogues, roundtables, and special sessions. This report is organized by session type.

Joint Opening of WUF Assemblies

Opening the session on Sunday, Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat, welcomed participants to the first WUF in Central and Eastern Europe, noting its gender parity and high registration numbers. She listed five priorities



Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat



Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak, Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, Poland

for WUF11: partnerships to review NUA implementation; quick impact projects to develop monitoring mechanisms; approaches for promoting human rights and equity; policies to monitor global commitments; and sustainable urban and land-use planning.

Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak, Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, Poland, emphasized the importance of city-dweller participation to make good cities for all. She wished attendees fruitful debate and “good conclusions.”

Emilia Sáiz, Secretary-General, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), stressed it is “time for peace and time for multilateralism.” Warning that human rights, particularly the rights of women, are “in peril,” she identified UCLG’s key commitments: human rights; foregrounding the NUA; the right to the city; respecting the subsidiarity principle; and decentralization.

Violet Shivutse, Huairou Commission, underlined the importance of grassroots groups in shaping the outcomes of WUF11. Having helped shape the NUA and having experienced localization of NUA policies, grassroots groups “are here” to share lessons and collaboratively develop resolutions for a better way forward, she said.

Inés Sánchez de Madriaga, UN-Habitat, said women are powerful agents of change, and cities must better serve their needs, including the tasks of caring for the young, the elderly, and the daily life of families. She noted that the gender gap relating to these tasks has widened during the pandemic.

Ian Shapiro, CEO, REALL, said green, affordable homes help address challenges of climate change and inequality. Noting 70% of buildings that will exist in Africa and Asia in 2050 have not yet been built, he emphasized green housing as a “doorway to the SDG city, an inclusive and socially engaged city.”

Assemblies

The assemblies convened on Sunday.

Grassroots: The Grassroots Assembly stressed action, highlighting that communities put the SDGs into practice and women’s role in pandemic resilience. Addressing the Assembly, Mohd Sharif identified grassroots organizations as partners in the launch of a global action plan on World Cities Day and in: putting urban poverty at the center of political agendas; making

communities leaders in job creation, particularly for women and youth; and designing sustainable solutions. She urged them to be “drivers” in localizing the SDGs and scaling transformation.

Opening the Assembly, Shivutse said grassroots organizations have been seen as “beneficiaries” but have shown themselves to be “change agents.”

In a panel on implementing the SDGs, Shivutse noted that women took on the increased burden of providing care when services failed during the pandemic. Chris Williams, UN-Habitat, said grassroots organizations can translate key issues, such as basic services and the localization of decision making, into “concrete action.” Rose Molokoane, Slum Dwellers International (SDI), urged focusing transformation on informal settlements, not “cities that are already transformed.”

In panels on localizing the SDGs, building back better, and co-creation of systems, James Mwanjau, Civil Society Urban Development Platform, underscored the principles of justice, equity, and dignity as foundations of urban decision making. Veronica Katalushi, People’s Process on Housing and Poverty, emphasized inclusive partnerships: “Nothing for us without us.”

In a panel on co-creation and multi-level policymaking, Lajana Manandhar, Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, noted the difficulty of attending the WUF, suggesting that national or regional forums would be more accessible. Shivutse urged co-designing UN programmes in partnership with grassroots organizations. Moderator Sandy Schilen, Huairou Commission, emphasized grassroots organizations can be “proactive monitors,” using local knowledge to assess project viability.

Breakout sessions generated core takeaways, including: creating meaningful, inclusive partnerships with clear responsibilities; localizing the SDGs with the involvement of women and data collection for evidence-based advocacy; and building back with formalized partnerships and resources allocated to communities.

Children and Youth: In a panel discussion on youth and the 2030 Agenda, speakers called for more youth participation in decision making; highlighted youth leadership in implementing the SDGs despite overlapping economic, political, and health crises; and stressed that connecting the SDGs with local cultures, traditions, and neighborhoods was essential for enabling young people to understand and engage with the 2030 Agenda.



Participants warm up before the start of the Children and Youth Assembly.

In a panel discussion on youth leadership in sustainable urbanization, representatives from youth organizations said determination, consistency, and positive mindsets are key to furthering youth participation. Reflecting on what leadership meant to them, they underlined: empowering others in their generation; effectively communicating initiatives; and devising inclusive organizational structures. They lamented the persistent “tokenization” of youth and discrimination against young women.

A panel on safety, peace, and security identified counseling, consultations, community building, and social media as tools to promote peace among youth in conflict-ridden areas.

A panel on localizing the SDGs included a presentation by Hilmi Türkmen, Mayor of Uskudar, Turkey, on municipal initiatives to engage youth through sports and cultural centers. Speakers cited youth-inclusive programming, youth councils, and digital technologies as means to get young people involved in SDG implementation.

A panel on the private sector and youth engagement called for policies to support youth-led startups and for companies to develop apprenticeship programmes.

Breakout sessions focused on “climate changemakers,” gender and intersectionality, mental health and wellbeing, and safety, peace, and security.

Yücel Yılmaz, Mayor of Balıkesir, Turkey, announced the creation of a “One Stop Youth Centre” in his city.

In a closing segment, Leah Namugerwa, Fridays for Future, presented the “Global Youth DeclarACTION” – a list of demands by young people for sustainable urbanization. Mohd Sharif signed an agreement establishing a partnership between UN-Habitat and Fondation Botnar called the “Young Gamechangers Initiative.”

Women: Speakers shared experiences on: women’s “heroic” mobilization in the face of crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis, and the war in Ukraine; gender mainstreaming in local policy development and security; and the importance of women as central stakeholders in the fight against and recovery from crises. Several participants stressed the importance of redistributing labor and wealth evenly, so women are not doing most of the work with a fraction of the resources. This, they said, is especially important with respect to women’s livelihoods in the informal economy and grassroots organizations



Local musicians and dancers perform at the end of the Women’s Assembly.

working to implement the NUA and the SDGs without the support or recognition they deserve.

Speakers recommended: investing further in the SDGs; asking UN Member States to explicitly identify policies they are implementing to support the NUA; and advancing the collection and exchange of disaggregated data related to women's participation across society to inform the necessary transformation.

Supported by many, Claudia López Hernández, Mayor of Bogotá, Colombia, spoke of the urgent need to acknowledge and relieve women globally from their collective burden as unpaid caregivers, as “no agenda can be achieved if we continue to send men off to work while restricting women to unpaid care.”

Speakers called for women of all intersectional groups to make decisions and provide feedback relating to all aspects of society, including the economy, politics, education, and urban planning and mobility, because cities made for all women are cities made for everyone.

Concluding the session, Mohd Sharif noted the need to overcome the “triple C crises,” of COVID-19, climate change, and conflict, and to address the tension between capital and conflict.

Business: The session convened business leaders and government officials to identify opportunities for whole-of-sector approaches to accelerating the SDGs. Speakers emphasized the private sector's ability to innovate and spur economic activity as necessary to achieve sustainability, while others identified a need for cooperative solutions that were not only economical but also appealed to businesses' sense of social responsibility.

In a series of panels on businesses transforming cities for SDG impact, speakers noted the financial difficulties faced by municipalities as service providers. Declining revenues, they noted, require governments to rethink how to finance infrastructure and services, citing beneficial opportunities for business and government to align objectives, as supporting governments' core responsibilities sustains strong economies, which businesses rely on.

Speakers at a panel on the role of businesses across key industrial sectors, housing, real estate, technology, mobility, and finance, recognized opportunities for collaboration, but noted that meaningful change requires understanding the value proposition between both parties. Businesses and governments discussed the

challenges with public-private partnership models, and noted the need for innovative approaches to address emerging challenges.

Government officials discussed the private sector's role in recovery and reconstruction in a panel focused on the situation in Ukraine, emphasizing efforts within Ukraine and in Poland to meet the needs of refugees.

A panel on lessons learned in urban response and recovery highlighted business opportunities in supporting cities in crises. Speakers underscored that interventions need to prioritize local economies and respect local institutions and leadership. Panelists agreed that people need to be at the center of the recovery process, but improved frameworks, data, and resources are required for successful responses.

A panel on attracting business sector investment highlighted the need for cultivating an environment that prioritizes evidence-based policy, accountability, and transparency to make partnerships attractive.

World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments:

Facilitated by UCLG Secretary-General Sáiz and Paul Currie, Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) Africa, mayors, international organizations, and networks shared innovations and policy directions on implementing the SDGs and the NUA in the context of current global crises.

Many called for strengthening local and regional governments' voice in national and international decision making, insisting that those who bear the consequences must have a place at the decision-making table. Noting the multilateral system is failing to deliver the change we need, several proposed rebuilding it from the bottom up, and some described this as key to unlocking the NUA's potential to drive transformative change.

Stressing that women fill the gap when public and private actors fail to provide care, speakers proposed to decentralize care provision, reverse the privatization of care, and “de-commodify” access to essential services.

On cities and conflict, many lauded cities' role in protecting refugees and vulnerable populations and encouraged city-to-city dialogues and rights-based approaches to providing safety and security. Speakers also called for adequate investments in public transportation as a fundamental service impacting equality, health, and the environment, with some also calling for more national governments to include public transportation in their climate action plans.



Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat, addresses participants of the Business Assembly.



A view of the room during the well-attended World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments.



High-level participants cut the ribbon to open WUF11.

Opening Ceremony

On Monday morning, Master of Ceremonies Anna Butrym welcomed participants to WUF11.

Mateusz Morawiecki, Prime Minister of Poland, said the COVID-19 pandemic showed urban life must be redefined, prioritizing tackling inequalities in cities. In a pre-recorded video message, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said cities are central to achieving the SDGs and addressing climate change. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat, listed five themes for WUF11: housing services and urban development; climate action; urban prosperity; multilevel governance; and post-conflict and post-disaster recovery.

In a pre-recorded video message, Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev spoke on rebuilding cities in liberated territories and presented his country's offer to host a future WUF.

Also via recorded video message, Colombia's President Iván Duque Márquez described his country's development as an "axis of sustainable future," focusing on green urban development policies and projects.

Grzegorz Puda, Minister of Development Funds and Regional Policy, Poland, highlighted Katowice's transformation into a modern city and Poland's growth as items for WUF11 discussions. Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak, Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, Poland, said WUF11 organizers sought to involve the entire city in preparations, including a Youth Council. Underlining the importance of citizen



Mateusz Morawiecki, Prime Minister of Poland

involvement, Marcin Krupa, Mayor of Katowice, attributed his city's transformation from "industrial to modern" to the work of thousands of residents.

Elisa Ferreria, Commissioner of Cohesion and Reforms, European Commission, stated that there is never a situation where less cooperation is beneficial, and that social and demographic challenges cannot be solved if the needs of cities and their surrounding areas are overlooked. Berry Vrbanovic, Mayor of Kitchener, Canada, and Governing President, UCLG, called for both city-to-city and local, regional, and national collaboration to create the enabling environment needed to achieve the SDGs. Katarzyna Smętek, WUF11 Youth Council, said while the WUF's initiative to establish and work with the Youth Council represented progress, further efforts should meaningfully engage youth, calling for systematic inclusion in delegations.

Lewis Akenji, Hot or Cool Institute, emphasized transforming cities by addressing social tensions between: rising production and dwindling resources; poverty and consumerism; and increasing waste and decreasing sinks. He urged "thriving" cities for people, not cars, with universal basic services, car-free centers, measures of wellbeing, and capacity building that avoids the "small action trap."

Mohd Sharif then declared WUF11 officially open.

Dialogues

Extraordinary Dialogue on Urban Crisis Response and Recovery: This dialogue took place on Monday.

UCLG Secretary-General Sáiz stressed the need to transform local systems to increase their efficiency in addressing the crises of health, man-made conflict, and natural disasters.

Moderator Nigel Fisher, UN-Habitat, invited speakers to reflect on: the nature and scale of urban crises; how recovery can offer opportunities to accelerate the necessary transformations; and the role of mayors as first responders and visionaries.

Leilani Farha, Director, The Shift, said the housing crisis is driven by the creation of wealth through rising house prices. Clarissa Augustinus, UN-Habitat, urged for agile, fit-for-purpose systems to enhance biodiversity and address housing and equity issues.

Mary Kaldor, London School of Economics, said wars are shifting to cities where civilians suffer the highest casualties and must thus be better protected. Gilles Carbonnier, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), spoke to the challenges of areas in urban warfare, namely ensuring the protection of citizens, critical infrastructure, and access to essential services.

Andy Deacon, Global Covenant of Mayors, explained that local leaders have the tools to "lead the way to the zero-carbon future we desperately need."

Filiep Decorte, UN-Habitat, noted communities need localized data to access resources needed to mobilize action.

Bogotá's Mayor López Hernández recounted seven "waves" of crises in her city, from the pandemic to unemployment and social strife, and the democratic changes and sustainable policies that have built opportunities. Responding to a question about financial challenges, she discussed her initiative of freezing taxes for



Claudia López Hernández, Mayor of Bogotá, Colombia

households while increasing taxes for industries profiting from crises.

Mohd Sharif called for youth and local governments to be given the means to lead on urban crises and warned that we are returning to a world of “me, myself, and those I know” at a time when solidarity is needed.

Sameh Wahba, World Bank, stated that investing in urban resilience is no longer a luxury, but a necessity. Raouf Mazou, UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), stated that cities are absorbing most displaced peoples globally, facing difficulties in the process.

Emmanuel Jal, independent artist and former child soldier, explained how he used imagination to survive and overcome trauma. He said access to books and education is essential to enable traumatized children to imagine a better future.

On solutions, Carbonnier outlined how health and education services were maintained in Brazilian cities through training service providers. Mazou said supporting refugees in cities rather than urban camps enables better services and integration. Wahba emphasized livelihoods and places as “two critically important dimensions that need to go hand in hand” in crisis recovery.

Equitable Urban Futures: This dialogue took place on Tuesday, 28 June.

Speaking during a panel on the scale of equity, Naoko Yamamoto, World Health Organization, highlighted national-level policies to support local innovation and crisis response.

Paweł Wdówik, Ministry of Family and Social Policy, Poland, reminded participants that urban solutions, such as new modes of transportation, must be inclusive of persons with disability. Renu Khosla, Director, Center of Urban and Regional Excellence, said urban inequalities must be tackled quickly before they become intergenerational and harder to address. Fabrice Menya Me Noah, Fonds Spécial d'Équipement et d'Intervention Intercommunale (FEICOM), underlined partnerships with beneficiaries as an element of participatory urban development.

During a panel on local governments and civil society achieving equity, Jan Olbrycht, European Parliament, outlined collaborative partnerships between all levels of government. Elcio Batista, City of Fortaleza, Brazil, noted that even in non-democratic national environments, local governments can make structural advances on issues of equity. Marc Workman, CEO,



Paweł Wdówik, Ministry of Family and Social Policy, Poland, addresses participants.

World Blind Union, said 15% of urban dwellers experience disabilities, citing participatory planning among the best practices to respond to their needs.

Chioma Agwuegbo, Executive Director, TechHerNG, spoke on educating women and girls in Nigeria on technology uses from the lenses of gender and security.

Building Resilience for Sustainable Urban Futures: This dialogue took place on Tuesday.

Moderator Krystyna Schreiber, Government of Catalonia, Spain, said resilient cities not only withstand adversity, but challenge underlining conditions. Daniel Wąsik, Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, Poland, stated resilience creates the basis for long-term success. Mami Mizutori, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, called for immediate action to build urban resilience “before the opportunity passes.”

In a panel on localizing resilience strategies, Noraini Roslan, Mayor of Subang Jaya, Malaysia, prioritized aligning strategies with the objective of building resilience. Sergio López, Medellín, Colombia, highlighted his city’s progress towards resilience by creating new green spaces, efficient transportation systems, and better education programmes, and by continuing efforts to end violence. Maria Galino, Director of Urban Agenda, Catalonia, detailed a “territorial perspective” that uses digital tools to help bring balance, prosperity, and equity to the region’s urban and rural areas.

Mohammed Ikbel Khaled, Mayor of Sousse, Tunisia, outlined challenges resulting from social change, economic crises, sea-level rise, and migration. Vera Revina Sari, Government of Jakarta, Indonesia, said the city is using lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic to reduce environmental impacts and build an adaptive, digital, fun, and sustainable city.

In a panel on policy directions for innovative urban solutions, speakers linked resilience with integration through regional coordination across borders, systems promoting solidarity, and non-linear, multi-level approaches. “Resilience is a real opportunity to integrate” and build capacities for development, said Walter Cotte, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent. Ian McKinnon, Global Disability Innovation Hub, said it is imperative to take all citizens into account so that solutions for resilience include persons with disability.

Future Urban Economy and Finance: This dialogue took place on Wednesday, 29 June.

Marjeta Jager, European Commission, described the link between urbanization and structural transformation, noting the urgent need for infrastructure investments.

In a panel on the potential of urbanization as an economic development vehicle, speakers highlighted: connections between trade, industry, and urban priorities; housing construction as a pathway out of poverty; and the reconstruction of liberated territories under a “green economic zones” concept.

Responding to questions on climate action and green building materials, panelists discussed the need to: improve local governments’ capacities to mobilize funding and develop green industries; invest in both tangible and intangible infrastructure; and include the informal economy.

In a panel on investment coordination, speakers described: the importance of closing the loop between local investments and capturing returns through fiscal mechanisms; the need to build capacities of diverse local governments; and lessons learned from a financing initiative in Cabo Verde that includes social community bonds.

Responding to questions, speakers highlighted: how national governments can support local governments’ access to financing, including securing debt; the need to consider broader economic impacts of urban development investment; and the importance of bringing diverse decision makers to the table to solve cross-cutting urban challenges.

Integrated Governance in Spatial Planning for a More Just, Green, and Healthy Urban Future: This dialogue took place on Wednesday.

Keynote speaker Collen Vixen Kelapile, UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) President, highlighted the release of the World Cities Report 2022, which invites cities to: acknowledge the poorest residents as “true urban partners”; enhance coordination through effective governance; and plan for sustainable urban growth.

Marylin Pintor, Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development, the Philippines, highlighted how the department coordinates across agencies to address the fragmentation of the housing sector and promote civil society voices in planning. Ana Marina Ramos Jiménez, National Institute of Territorial Planning

and Urbanism, Cuba, said her country drew on the NUA to align housing policies and land use with the 2030 Agenda.

Marcela Villareal, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), said transparent and participatory local governance is essential to address malnutrition and food waste in cities, noting FAO’s willingness to support cities to integrate food systems into their agenda. Sertac Erten, Arup Turkey, said to improve urban infrastructure, it is necessary to understand how segments of a city’s population, such as nightshift workers, use it differently.

Bachir Kanoute, International Observatory for Participatory Democracy, underscored the absence of citizens in urban planning, suggesting that trust and solidarity are essential for encouraging participation.

In ensuing discussion, panelists emphasized: connecting housing development to the provision of basic services; gender-based perspectives on policymaking; and democratizing specialist knowledge so it is understandable for all.

Greener Urban Futures: This dialogue took place on Thursday, 30 June.

In a first panel, Abdel Khalek Ibrahim, Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities, Egypt, encouraged linking discussions at the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference and WUF12, both of which are due to take place in Egypt. Jamie Pumarejo, Mayor of Barranquilla, Colombia, urged citizens to “shame their policymakers into action.”

Sonja Leighton-Kone, UN Environment Programme, highlighted challenges for growing cities to develop in a green manner and for large cities to reduce consumption.

In response to questions, speakers highlighted the importance of raising environmental awareness, sustainable urbanization as a priority for the UN Climate Change Conference in Sharm El-Sheikh, and ways to address gaps in financing at the local level.

In a second panel, Nicolás Galarza, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Colombia, called for locally applicable scientific findings on climate. Sharon Djiksma, Mayor of Utrecht, the Netherlands, noted cities are key to meeting climate targets.

Rose Molokoane, Slum Dwellers International, stressed communities are made vulnerable when things are done for them rather than with them. Leah Namugerwa, Fridays for Future, said the quest for sustainability will not fail due to a lack of knowledge, but a lack of action.



Collen Vixen Kelapile, ECOSOC President



Group photo of speakers of the Greener Urban Futures Dialogue

Mariana Mazzucato, University College London, said civil servants should reclaim agency from the private sector.

Speakers also highlighted the need for national and international bodies to institutionalize partnership with communities and local actors in achieving the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Transforming Cities through Innovative Solutions and Technologies: This dialogue took place on Thursday.

Maria-Francesca Spatolisano, UN Acting Envoy on Technology, stressed the need for collaboration between all stakeholders to shape an “open and secure digital future.” Krzysztof Szubert, High Representative of the Prime Minister for European Digital Policy, Poland, mentioned affordable and universal access to internet as a requirement for reducing the digital divide.

Jean Todt, UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Road Safety, noted the potential of technology to address urban road safety, but emphasized people must be placed at the center of digital development. Mahmoud Shaarawy, Minister of Local Development, Egypt, shared his country’s experiences utilizing technology in waste management services.

Debolina Kundu, National Institute of Urban Affairs, India, urged education efforts to improve digital literacy and the removal of the urban-rural dichotomy by bringing benefits of technologies to rural areas now, as rural areas of today are urban areas of the future.

Zach White, Global System for Mobile Communications, stressed the role of mobile devices as the backbone of digital services, and highlighted the success of “mobile money” in Africa.

Panelists also stressed the importance of: closing digital divides, including divides affecting persons with disability; putting people, rather than technology first; establishing technology standards and ethical decision making; and aligning technology with cultural identities.

Roundtables

Local and Regional Governments: This roundtable took place on Monday. It featured panels on empowered local governments and caring cities.

The panel on empowered local governments urged, *inter alia*:

- Sufficient resources for providing vital services;
- Rethinking forms of government, with an emphasis on decentralization;
- Green development;
- Caring for vulnerable groups, with an emphasis on women’s rights and sheltering those experiencing homelessness; and
- Direct, “non-sovereign finance,” such as municipal bonds for water and large-scale equity partnerships.

The panel on caring cities urged, *inter alia*:

- Implementing lessons from the pandemic, such as creating open spaces, digitally transforming services, and building resilience;
- Focusing on engaging in dialogue with people affected by crisis, and treating services like education as rights, not privileges;



A view of the Local and Regional Governments Roundtable

- Reconfiguring local institutions for innovation and inclusivity; and
- Taking into account gender equality and the care of the elderly and children in the development of local policies.

In closing, UCLG Secretary-General Sáiz emphasized that the local and regional governments constituency is an “ally for multilateralism” and that “a culture of peace is the basis for development.” She prioritized: a “universal agenda” linking issues; decentralization and local governments’ sharing power; strengthening communities by ensuring they receive necessary services; and human rights as the basis for caring cities.

National Urban Policies in a Changing World: This roundtable, led by Poland, convened on Monday.

UN-Habitat Executive Director Mohd Sharif opened the discussion by emphasizing the strength of National Urban Policies (NUPs) in fostering intersectoral and interregional coordination.

Poland’s Minister of Development Funds and Regional Policy Grzegorz Puda outlined his country’s new NUP, which responds to the challenges cities have been facing.

Ministers and high-level European officials focused on NUPs from the lenses of:

- Innovation and technology, with Veronika Remišová, Deputy Prime Minister of Slovakia, highlighting the importance of data for effective decision making;
- Environment and energy transition, with Radim Sršeň, Deputy Minister of Regional Development, Czech Republic, highlighting the connection between digitization and



Speakers at the National Urban Policies in a Changing World Roundtable

resilience, and Ireneusz Zyska, Ministry of Climate and Environment, Poland, discussing diversification of energy sources, and energy sovereignty;

- Housing, with Klara Geywitz, Federal Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Building, Germany, underscoring the urgent and widespread need for affordable, sustainable, and secure homes;
- Mobility, with Mattias Landgren, Sweden's State Secretary to Minister for Housing and Deputy Minister for Employment, noting the need for sustainable, efficient, and safe transportation systems; and
- Spatial planning, with Karen Van Dantzig, Urban Envoy for the Netherlands, discussing "efficient, functional, and beautiful" land use when land is limited.

The session concluded with Poland's Minister of Economic Development and Technology Waldemar Buda stressing the need to break through silos and foster cross-sectoral collaboration on urban development.

Business and Industries: This roundtable took place on Monday.

Discussions focused on increasing private sector engagement in sustainable city development and on how the private sector can help address financial bottlenecks. Participants heard two success stories: the Regent Park revitalization project in Toronto, Canada; and the Lagos Inland Waterways Programme in Nigeria. A panel of experts then discussed ideas to overcome challenges to private sector participation in sustainable urban development, including:

- Increasing cities' capacities to absorb public funding and private investments;
- Social contracts articulating a long-term vision that can survive electoral cycles;
- Sound performance metrics and local sustainable development indicators to improve transparency and accountability;
- Engaging stakeholders around solutions rather than projects;
- Involving all stakeholders, including the private sector, as early as possible in planning to ensure that the right solutions are found;
- Mobilizing local capital; and
- Digital ecosystems for knowledge sharing to allow for scaling of successful projects.



The dais of the Business and Industries Roundtable during the online presentation by **Mitchell Cohen**, President and CEO, The Daniels Corporation

One panelist noted that investment in municipal projects is often hindered by miscommunication about risk, with others agreeing that greater transparency is needed to allow investors to make informed decisions on whether a project is "investable," and which types of capital are needed.

Parliamentarians: This roundtable took place on Tuesday.

Moderator Siraj Sait, Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise, invited recommendations on enhancing parliamentarians' role in sustainable urbanization. Rafael Tuts, UN-Habitat, encouraged discussions on collaboration with the executive branch and stakeholders.

Hanna Gill-Piątek, Poland, emphasized raising awareness and exchanging expertise between parliamentarians and citizens.

Keynote speaker Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, Governor of Kisumu County, Kenya, highlighted parliamentarian leadership in urban policy, spatial and urban planning, and urban finance.

Sahar Attia, Egypt, said parliamentarians should monitor and report on alignment of NUPs with the NUA. Ganga Lal Tuladhar, Nepal, highlighted parliamentarians' role in supporting low-carbon investments and managing disaster risk reduction.

Camila Crescimbeni, Argentina, urged educating youth and decision makers on the SDGs and the NUA, and including the private sector in policy development and implementation for greater social, economic, and environmental productivity. Daniel Uwadia Osayimwense, Nigeria, stressed the role of rural development in reducing migration.

Summarizing the discussion, Attia highlighted the need to facilitate legislation for NUA implementation and inclusion of urban issues in parliamentary agendas.

Older Persons: This roundtable took place on Tuesday.

Panelists discussed age-friendly cities from the perspective of both the built and virtual environments, underlining the importance of accessible public spaces to promote dignity, autonomy, and human rights of older persons. Discussions focused on: participatory design processes to account for aging; the intersection of age and gender; the safety of older people; and the need for social connection. Finally, discussants highlighted a gap in frameworks on the human rights of older people, and called for a societal shift in mentality around aging. Rio Hada, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), stated "ageism is the root of age-based inequality."



Angela Mwai, UN-Habitat, moderates the Older Persons Roundtable.



Achie Ojany Alai, Kisumu, Kenya, moderates the Ministerial Roundtable.

Ministerial: This roundtable took place on Tuesday.

Moderated by Achie Ojany Alai, Kisumu, Kenya, the roundtable included 25 presentations by ministers or ministerial staff. ECOSOC President Collen Vixen Kelapile outlined collaboration efforts with the UN Secretariat to increase momentum for NUA implementation. Mohd Sharif asked ministers to focus on: NUA implementation in SDG achievement; housing and social security; climate change; urban displacement; and finance.

Many ministers outlined national efforts to implement the NUA, including policy frameworks, programmes, and action plans, voluntary NUA reports, and mechanisms for stakeholder engagement and collaboration.

Ministers agreed that affordable and sustainable housing is not only key to many dimensions of sustainable urbanization, including social security, safety, and health, but also a fundamental question of human dignity. Several highlighted the need to meet the rapidly growing demand for housing, which has accelerated due to recent crises.

Regarding urban displacement, several ministers drew the link between rural development and migration, stressing people everywhere must have access to basic services and safe housing. One minister reported on progress in rebuilding liberated territories to enable the return of internally displaced persons.

On climate change, participants showcased projects to increase green spaces and plant trees alongside efforts to support public transport in reducing emissions.

Several ministers discussed finance, with approaches ranging from direct funding to incentivizing private sector investment, with some stating that housing must be integrated with economic development to ensure that new residents can find jobs.

Mohd Sharif lauded the efforts undertaken and appealed to ministers to “implement what you say you will implement, because our children are watching us.”

Persons with Disability: This roundtable took place on Tuesday.

Paweł Wdówik, Ministry of Family and Social Policy, Poland, highlighted that city dwellers and persons with disability are not homogenous groups. Via video message, Victor Pineda,



Participants listen to panel speakers during the Persons with Disability Roundtable.

President, World Enabled, said 25% of those living in cities experience barriers based on disability or age.

A panel on stocktaking discussed the importance of: accessibility legislation and standards; genuinely engaging persons with disability; and universal design in promoting equity. Several commented on the connection between mental health and urban design, with one speaker calling for cities to make services accessible for people with psychosocial disabilities instead of creating separate institutions.

A panel on building back better together noted the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected persons with disability, and called for: the collection of disaggregated data to shape social policies; industries to build inclusive technology solutions; and tailored employment opportunities to reduce barriers to access the labor market.

Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak, Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, Poland, described progress made under the “Accessibility Plus” programme in Poland.

One UN: This roundtable took place on Wednesday.

Participants voiced support for improving coordination across agencies and developing joint programmes to achieve sustainable urbanization. Inclusivity and participation emerged as key themes. ECOSOC President Vixen Kelapile noted that 70% of the next generation will live in cities, and urged addressing inequalities “as we look at the NUA.”

Célestine Ketcha Courtès, Minister of Urban Development and Housing, Cameroon, emphasized the need to include residents alongside public authorities and partners from the private sector in urban planning and development. “You can’t treat your patient if you don’t know where the pain is,” she said.

Violet Shivotse, Huairou Commission, urged treating grassroots constituencies as partners.

UN resident coordinators cited “promising” approaches to sustainable urbanization, including: territorial approaches that create synergies; private sector partnerships; and people-centered perspectives on reducing inequalities. Core challenges they highlighted include: mobilizing finance; disaggregating data; and responding to environmental crises and population displacements.

Women: This roundtable took place on Wednesday.

Featuring women from civil society and the public and private sectors, presenters highlighted success stories from their respective contexts. Underlining the importance of solidarity, they called for continued advancement of the women's agenda, highlighting the persistent threat of moving backwards. As leaders in their communities, participants spoke of their experiences introducing gender-responsive services to support women and communities in the areas of:

- Family, including supporting parents and especially mothers by providing care for young children;
- Health, by providing cancer screening capacity to underserved areas;
- Safety, including designing cities with quality housing and public spaces;
- Education, by providing women and girls with the necessary competencies and skills to succeed;
- Politics, and how to get involved in local legal systems to uplift gender-based development principles; and
- Finance, including how to spend, save, and participate in economic systems.

Academia: This roundtable took place on Wednesday.

In a panel on innovation in research, Robert Pyka, University of Katowice, pointed to cooperation between universities and municipalities in the Katowice area.

Anna Hurlimann, University of Melbourne, said what facilitates climate change adaptation in Australia's built environment varies across sectors.

Montaser Hiyari, Applied Science University, described the development of service provision benchmarks at various governance levels. Peter Elias, University of Lagos, called for participatory research methods to assess SDG implementation. Antonella Contin, Politecnico di Milano, described a cartographic tool for metropolitan decision making.

Héctor García Curiel, University of Guadalajara, said culture and education can transform urban life.

In a panel on innovation and education, Svafa Grönfeldt, Massachusetts Institute for Technology, said design innovation is "a connector" between science and user needs. Hassan Yakubu,

Mohammed VI University, outlined digital divides in education in African cities.

Mennatullah Hendawy, Cairo Urban AI, called for increased interdisciplinarity in urban planning. Rita Padawangi, Singapore University of Social Sciences, presented an interdisciplinary Southeast Asian network to re-conceptualize cities.

Enrique Silva, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, said professional development courses support practitioners in fiscally managing cities.

Professionals: This roundtable took place on Wednesday.

Panelists discussed the roles and responsibilities of professionals in accelerating the SDGs and incorporating them into their services.

Rafael Tuts, UN-Habitat, described "interprofessional" knowledge exchanges as key to sustainable urbanization, and highlighted the role of the Habitat Professionals Forum (HPF) in strengthening relationships between private and public partners. A representative of the HPF shared a presentation on a recently released framework for development professions to advance the NUA titled, "The HPF 2022 Roadmap Recovery." Acknowledging the report, Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi, UCLG Africa, questioned the universal applicability of such documents, citing Africa's 7% annual urbanization rate as a "unique situation."

Noraida Saludin, Malaysia Planning Institute, emphasized the need for capacity building across all sectors to achieve the SDGs.

The roundtable then broke into working groups to discuss themes relating to accelerating the SDGs, building local partnerships, ethics and capacity building, and crises and reconstruction.

Foundations and Philanthropies: This roundtable took place on Wednesday.

Moderator Stefan Germann, CEO, Fondation Botnar, noted that, contrary to the public sector, foundations can invest in the "upside of risk," and explore new approaches to impact. Author Gemma Bull described values of grant making that are driving reform in many foundations, including humility, equity, evidence, service, and diligence. Mohd Sharif reiterated that closing the funding gap is essential to accelerate SDG implementation.



Panel speakers during the presentation by **Antonella Contin**, Politecnico di Milano



Stefan Germann, CEO, Fondation Botnar, moderated the Foundations and Philanthropies Roundtable.

Panelists presented foundations' experiences in supporting housing development, and discussed, among other issues:

- The challenges of supporting complex systems of urban development;
- The need for better data to understand sustainable housing and its impacts on human wellbeing and sustainable development;
- The tension between supporting bottom-up, co-created solutions and national urban policies; and
- The need to scale successful models.

Participants also discussed:

- How young organizations can build relationships with foundations;
- Whether democratizing grant-making decisions will increase effectiveness; and
- How foundations can become more effective through collaboration and reduced reporting burdens.

Children and Youth: This roundtable took place on Wednesday.

Mohd Sharif said children and youth are the motors of change. Via video, the First Lady of Serbia Tamara Vučić called for more exchanges of knowledge about early childhood.

In an intergenerational panel, speakers noted: best practices in the establishment of youth councils; that youth do not need to be “taught” but rather equipped with data and knowledge; the lack of attention to climate disasters affecting youth in the global South; and the need to keep governments accountable.

A panel of youth leaders debated the need to: train youth leaders to take climate action; help localize the SDGs by co-creating public spaces with youth; and address the unique set of mental health issues youth face. Representatives of Polish and Ukrainian youth councils reflected on how local governments can improve youth engagement in cities.

A panel comprised of practitioners discussed youth-led work on localizing the SDGs and the need to replace the “tokenization” of youth with meaningful engagement in areas where they have high stakes, such as environmental stewardship.

Civil Society and Grassroots Organizations: This roundtable took place on Thursday.



The dais during the video message made by **Tamara Vučić**, First Lady of Serbia

In his keynote address, Siraj Sait, Co-Chair of the Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise, noted the increasingly shrinking space for civil society and grassroots organizations, and highlighted the WUF as an opportunity to reflect on what more can be done, including how to “kick open the doors” for others too.

Ensuing discussion featured focused on, among other issues:

- Balancing formal and informal processes when collaborating with diverse groups;
- Capacity building and training to uplift the voices of people with lived experiences;
- Collective intelligence, co-creation, and co-design for systems change; and
- Going beyond discussions by taking action and urging others to act, including elected representatives.

Trade Unions and Workers: This roundtable took place on Thursday.

Participants emphasized the importance of public services and the need for a just transition for workers impacted by climate change.

Daria Cibrario, Public Service International (PSI), stressed the need to “re-municipalize” services that have been increasingly privatized.

James Bartholomeusz, International Transport Workers Federation, underscored that public transportation has been essential during the pandemic and will be critical for addressing climate change, but inadequate work conditions and pay are prompting workers to take strike action.

Linnea Wikström, Building and Woodworkers International, highlighted five components of just transition: social dialogue with stakeholders; job retraining; social protection as a right; policies supporting sustainable enterprises; and social justice.

Participants drew attention to additional concerns of: increasing privatization of health care services; inadequate housing for informal and migrant workers; and high inflation, which increases inequality.

David Boys, General Secretary, PSI, closed the roundtable by emphasizing that trade unions and workers should be “systematically” included in UN-Habitat processes as “active shapers” of urban development.



Linnea Wikström, Building and Woodworkers International



Nigel Fisher, UN-Habitat, moderates the special session on Urban Recovery Frameworks.

Special Sessions

Urban Recovery Frameworks: This special session took place on Monday.

Moderator Nigel Fisher, UN-Habitat, noted that international recovery partners tend to “parachute” into urban environments without fully understanding local realities.

Filiep Decorte, UN-Habitat, said urban recovery frameworks (URFs) offer integrated approaches to recovery but are difficult to implement when national and bottom-up frameworks are disconnected. Ryan Knox, UN-Habitat, gave a presentation on URFs piloted in Syrian cities. These were developed with local partners and seek to strengthen institutional arrangements, he said.

In a panel on governance and urban displacement, Martha Gutierrez, GIZ, said citizen consultations are essential when cities are confronted with an influx of internally displaced people. Lars Gronvald, European Commission, said the “urban level” is where multiple partners articulate a common strategy. Manuel de Araújo, Mayor of Quelimane, Mozambique, stated the case for the management of crisis response to be allocated to local governments. Fatma Şahin, Mayor of Gaziantep, Turkey, emphasized social justice as a key element of crisis recovery.

In a panel on cultural heritage and financing, Yevhen Plashchenko, Ministry of Development of Communities and Territories, Ukraine, highlighted that the needs of Ukrainian refugees must be addressed in host countries now and in Ukraine later when the country is prepared for their return. Ieva Kalnina, Swedish Association for Local Municipalities and Regions, stated a preference for humanitarian actors to work with local governments rather than NGOs. Sameh Wahba, World Bank, said both people-centered and infrastructure-related interventions are needed in crisis recovery.

Urban Data and Circular Economy: This special session took place on Monday.

In the first segment, Donald Simmonds, CitiIQ, discussed how simplified indicators can overcome data literacy issues. Charles Mwangi, Kenya Space Agency, emphasized that alongside data, open-source tools are needed to improve data uptake. Naledzani Mudau, South African National Space Agency, discussed data’s

role in improving services, assessing risk, and managing utilities in informal settlements. Matt Benson, Think City, explored how data could spur change, and stressed the importance of engaging the people behind the statistics. Angie Palacios, Development Bank of Latin America, outlined the divide between the growth in data availability and the underutilization of data by decision makers.

In the second segment, Mike Higgins, Circularwise, said a primary barrier to achieving circular economies lies in effectively communicating information to industry leaders. Discussing the support circular economies require, Fedra Vanhuyse, Stockholm Environment Institute, mentioned open-source assessment frameworks, opportunities for resource recovery, and mapping the impact of transition. Jenni Philippe, Edge Environment, said a shift beyond waste management and recycling is needed to develop a holistic vision for a circular economy measurement framework. Oriana Romano, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, cited the lack of government conviction and of financing mechanisms as barriers to achieving circular economies. Umesh Madhavan, The Circulate Initiative, highlighted ocean plastics as a gap in the circular economy, identifying them as a systems problem requiring significant investments to solve.

Rebuilding Communities and Neighborhoods After War and Natural Disasters: This special session took place on Tuesday.

Participants heard from Ukrainian leaders who stressed their commitment to rebuild Ukrainian cities and the country and emphasized people-centered approaches.

Speaking via video, Ihor Terekhov, Mayor of Kharkiv, said despite devastation to his city, “Kharkiv is still alive” and is working in partnership with the UN to spur redevelopment after the war. Rebuilding will emphasize green policies, accessibility, and new investment flows, he said.

Participants emphasized the value of grassroots efforts to connect Ukrainian refugees with their in-country hosts and the need for education and mental health services. They said it is imperative to secure comfortable housing for refugees before winter.



The dais of the Special Session on Rebuilding Communities and Neighborhoods After War and Natural Disasters, during the online intervention of **Maciej Popowski**, Directorate-General for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement

Speakers also highlighted that response efforts in Ukraine and other countries affected by conflict need to build back jobs, green infrastructure, and physical and social capital to improve conditions for refugees to return to their countries.

National Urban Forums – Strategic Platforms for Implementing the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda: This special session took place on Tuesday.

Participants shared experiences on the opportunities and challenges in hosting National Urban Forums (NUFs). Among the benefits shared were the opportunity to bring a variety of stakeholders, including local governments, businesses, and the private sector to the table for discussion, and the chance to allow for meaningful participatory decision making and co-design of urban policies.

However, panelists also noted the limitations of NUFs, citing challenges associated with reacting quickly to unforeseen crises, such as the flow of refugees from Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the financial costs of hosting large-scale events.

As next steps, the panel discussed aspirational visions for NUFs, including the possibility of a global NUF alliance to share experiences across cities, and the creation of local urban forums to support decision making at the local level.

Delivering Affordable Housing Across Countries: This special session took place on Tuesday.

Moderator Charles Hinga, State Department for Housing and Urban Development, Kenya, said housing is unaffordable and unavailable in most countries. Teresa Czerwińska, European Investment Bank, said the housing sector is becoming less accessible, and suggested solidarity and inclusivity be at the sector's forefront.

Panelists also discussed, *inter alia*: strategies to sustain and increase investments in adequate and affordable housing; leveraging technology to integrate the supply chain for better and cheaper delivery of housing options; and prerequisites for effective public-private partnerships, such as a sound legal environment.

Célestine Ketcha Courtès, Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Cameroon, presented innovative policies to close

the housing gap in the country. ECOSOC President Vixen Kelapile warned unaffordable housing fuels growth in slums. Mohd Sharif said UN-Habitat works towards promoting the right to adequate housing.

Tackling Urban Health Challenges in a Changing World: This special session took place on Tuesday.

The session began with a conversation about the multisectoral nature of health. Incompatible government policies between levels of government were provided as examples of barriers to good urban health. Speakers highlighted the need for a coordinated approach to city dweller health, given the “diverse” nature of health itself. Multiple panelists called for fundamental design principles for all current and future cities and for disaggregated data on inequities to inform and monitor urban development. Some suggested the greening of cities as a key aspect of improving mental and physical health and an opportunity to foster deeper social and cultural connections. Moderator Graham Alabaster, UN-Habitat, concluded by saying we “need to take modifying our urban environments much more seriously for the sake of urban health.”

The City we Need Now: This special session took place on Tuesday.

Christine Auclair, World Urban Challenge, opened the discussion by inviting participants to share action areas required to achieve the ten goals of The City we Need Now campaign. Panelists highlighted the following needs:

- Bringing women to the forefront of conversations;
- Recognizing the unique needs and challenges of youth;
- Building the capacity of municipalities to track data for decision making;
- Supporting community-led initiatives;
- Ensuring vibrant economic activities and opportunities for all;
- Implementing comprehensive and integrated planning and development;
- Timely responses to urban resilience challenges;
- Emphasis on nature-based solutions to address climate change; and
- Creating urban campuses to spark innovation.



Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat, and Célestine Ketcha Courtès, Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Cameroon



Christine Auclair, World Urban Challenge

It was agreed that these considerations will inform the future development of the campaign.

Climate Adaptation and Nature-Based Solutions for Resilient Cities: This special session took place on Tuesday.

Participants stressed the difficulty of mobilizing direct financing for “blue-green” projects, especially in “non-bankable cities.” They said political rivalries between local and national governments also present obstacles for nature-based solutions, while citizen pressure can break deadlocks.

Panelists urged “integrated thinking,” with multi-level decision making that crosses sectors and issues. Suggestions included: participatory governance; bringing finance ministers and mayors on board by emphasizing long-term economic benefits of nature-based solutions and their role in protecting lives; simultaneously mobilizing project, nature, human, and social capital; and drawing on traditional knowledge about sustainable living in harmony with nature.

The panel also identified examples of solutions that could be rapidly scaled: repurposing a city’s heritage, renewing a focus on parks in urban planning, and building permeable surfaces and floating agriculture.

Localizing the SDGs: This special session took place on Wednesday.

Anna-Leena Seppälä, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Finland, described Finland’s multi-level approach to enabling SDG localization and co-creation. UCLG Secretary-General Sáiz observed an increase in political will to drive localization, understanding of the SDGs, and local service provision.

In a panel on planning for the SDGs, speakers highlighted the need for, *inter alia*: technical support and financial resources to implement local SDG priorities; collaboration across all sectors and levels of government; and a whole-of-society, all-of-government approach.

In a panel focusing on partnerships and financing, speakers highlighted:

- How the COVID-19 pandemic became a catalyst for action in Saint Lucia;
- How multiple types of engagement processes initiated a citizen-led articulation of a 2030 vision for Mannheim, Germany; and
- That youth engagement must be institutionalized to tap into youth’s capacity for communication and co-creation.

Participants also discussed new localization initiatives, including UN-Habitat’s Local 2030 Coalition and the G20 Platform on SDGs Localisation and Intermediary Cities.

Prerequisites for Productive Investment in Infrastructure and Sustainable Urban Development: This special session took place on Wednesday.

Keynote speaker Paulius Kulikauskas, UN-Habitat, stated that even if all the capital necessary for projects is available, revenue is required to support operations and maintain investments. This revenue, he said, is difficult to capture through inefficient taxation and a consumer base unable to pay for services.



The dais during the Special Session on Prerequisites for Productive Investment in Infrastructure and Sustainable Urban Development

Panelists expanded on challenges facing productive investments, citing: the rate of urbanization and the inability for complex projects to be financed in a timely manner; the disconnect between local, regional, and national governments; limited capacity of local governments; channeling investments towards green and social projects; and private sector confidence in emerging economies as key issues.

To increase the productivity of investments, panelists suggested: a shift away from ideological investment towards context-specific development; strengthening the financial capacity of local governments; and implementing pilot projects to demonstrate market opportunities to the private sector.

Shaping Equitable Urban Futures: This special session took place on Wednesday.

Local government officials shared experiences with innovative projects, including systems and partnerships that improve the well-being of women and provide affordable housing. Diana Rodríguez, Secretary for Women’s Affairs, Bogotá, described the city’s establishment of a care system that addresses women’s “time poverty.” By creating infrastructure linking basic services in close physical proximity, the city has enabled women to have more time for their own education and care, she said.

Javier Burón, City of Barcelona, detailed the city’s approach to establishing affordable housing through public, private, and



Diana Rodríguez, Secretary for Women’s Affairs, Bogotá, Colombia

community collaborations. Lessons he highlighted include the importance of continuity in financial and political support and the value of using a human rights-based approach to holding governments accountable.

Rodriguez emphasized “flexibility as a criterion for designing and redesigning the urban space” in uncertain times.

Accelerating Post COVID-19 Recovery, Social Inclusion, and Urban Inequality Reduction in Communities: This special session took place on Wednesday.

Among major themes for accelerating recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, speakers highlighted a strong emphasis on solidarity and unity among all actors, including all levels of government, local grassroots organizations, individuals, and the international community.

Several panelists highlighted the need to fully implement and institutionalize a human rights-based approach to development and social protection systems to mitigate the impacts of future crises. Accessibility, equity, and our collective responsibility for one another were also raised as important considerations in the recovery and development processes.

The panel concluded with ECOSOC President Vixen Kelapile calling for countries presenting their Voluntary National Reviews at the upcoming HLPF to highlight how they have strengthened their social protection systems in response to COVID-19.

People-centered and Green Technology and Innovation: This special session took place on Thursday.

In opening remarks, Rafael Tuts, UN-Habitat, said smart cities can generate inclusive change but also reinforce inequalities. He called for: greater financing to bridge the digital divide; a people-centered approach to technology; and internationally agreed norms on smart cities.

Keynote speaker Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol, UK, said appropriate funding is a prerequisite for infrastructural innovations that lead to environmental and social justice.

In a first panel, speakers from a range of professional and geographical backgrounds outlined: programmes to get affordable digitization to rural areas; how to reconcile digital progress with environmental concerns in sectors such as transportation; and the need to leverage digitization to improve accessibility for persons with disability.



Rafael Tuts, UN-Habitat



Local musicians perform at the beginning of the closing ceremony.

A second panel discussed what international guidance on smart cities should contain and suggested: creating collaborative platforms for stakeholders to come together; considerations on how to navigate human rights in relation to emerging technology such as artificial intelligence and drone deliveries; and fostering a culture of knowledge sharing with startups and technology companies.

Closing Ceremony

At the closing ceremony on Thursday afternoon, Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak, Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy, Poland, highlighted that WUF11 was hosted in ways that align with sustainable urban development goals, including unprecedented accessibility for persons with disability. She said WUF11 enables “bold steps,” not just planning, for sustainable urban futures.

UN-Habitat Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif said the COVID-19 pandemic proved our capacity for short-term radical change, but warned we need to develop our ability to deliver long-term and sustainable change. She listed the effects of crises on our urban environments, stressing the need to mitigate their impacts and build collaboratively for a sustainable future. Congratulating Egypt on being chosen as the host of WUF12, she underscored the need to invest “clearly and immediately” to implement the NUA and achieve the 169 targets of the SDGs during “the 2,742 days” we have left to do so.



Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat, addresses participants during the closing ceremony.



Marcin Krupa, Mayor of Katowice

Marcin Krupa, Mayor of Katowice, highlighted the significance of WUF11 for the city.

Nuno Gomes Nabiam, Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau, noted the need to transfer technology and know-how to regions most vulnerable to climate change, such as his country, including in the field of urban resilience.

Among the core themes, ECOSOC President Vixen Kelapile highlighted people-centered policies that meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations, coordination across stakeholders and levels of government, and the role of women in meeting sustainable urbanization goals.

Martha Delgado, President of the UN-Habitat Assembly, presented the WUF11 Declared Actions, which, *inter alia*: call for more international collective actions to support implementation of the NUA as the roadmap for accelerating sustainable development, climate action, and building peace; state a concern for the lack of progress towards the SDGs; urge moving from incrementalism towards fundamental shifts in urban environments; stress the need to focus on increasingly imminent urban crises; and affirm culture as an integral part of meeting urban challenges – and accessibility and universal design as part of transformative action.

Two Polish youth thanked WUF organizers for championing accessibility and the involvement of young people and called for these elements to remain “focal points in urban development.”



Mahmoud Shaarawy, Minister of Local Development, Egypt, and **Maimunah Mohd Sharif**, UN-Habitat Executive Director, sign the WUF12 agreement.

In a handover ceremony, Jarosińska-Jedynak passed the WUF baton to Mahmoud Shaarawy, Minister of Local Development, Egypt. Shaarawy noted he hoped to welcome participants in Sharm el-Sheikh for the UN Climate Change Conference in November and in Cairo for WUF12, noting the latter would be the first Forum since WUF1 to take place in an African city.

Mohd Sharif declared WUF11 closed at 18:18, after which Shaarawy and Mohd Sharif signed the WUF12 agreement.

Final Outcome: In the “Katowice Declared Actions: Transforming our Cities for a Better Urban Future,” WUF11 participants declare their voluntary actions and commitments for the next two years and beyond, including:

- Move from incrementalism towards fundamental shifts in urban environments, systems of governance and forms of habitation, in line with human rights treaties;
- Focus on imminent urban crises such as climate and biodiversity emergencies, pandemics, violence and conflicts, and other natural and man-made disasters, that all converge in cities and surrounding territories;
- Reconfirm culture as a core component of local identity;
- Reconfirm that accessibility and universal design are an integral part of the solution to the challenges of urbanization; and
- Encourage all development actors to mobilize their capacities in the UN Decade of Action, and appeal to governments to better fund UN-Habitat.

Stakeholders are encouraged to submit additional Declared Actions until 31 July 2022 through the Urban Agenda Platform.

Upcoming Meetings

UN High-level Meeting on Road Safety: The UN General Assembly will hold a highlevel meeting on improving global road safety in July 2022. The theme of the high-level meeting will be “The 2030 horizon for road safety: Securing a decade of action and delivery.” The meeting is expected to result in a political decision. **dates:** 30 June - 1 July 2022 **location:** New York, US **www:** www.un.org/pga/76/event/high-level-meeting-on-global-road-safety/

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2022: The 2022 meeting of the HLPF, convened under the auspices of the ECOSOC, will take place under the theme, “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” **dates:** 5-7 July and 11-15 July 2022 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York, US **www:** hlpf.un.org/2022

10th International Conference of Sustainable Development: European Center of Sustainable Development in collaboration with Canadian Institute of Technology will organize the 10th ICSD 2022 International Conference on Sustainable Development, with particular focus on Environmental, Economic and Socio-Cultural Sustainability. **dates:** 7-8 September 2022 **location:** Rome, Italy **www:**

ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/pl/newsroom/events/2022/09/icisd-2022-10th-international-conference-on-sustainable-development-7-8-september-rome-italy

IWA World Water Congress and Exhibition: The International Water Association (IWA) World Water Congress and Exhibition 2022 will be held on the theme, “Water for Smart Liveable Cities.” The event will report on the water sector’s progress on the SDGs and focus on the digital economy, smart and liveable cities, entrepreneurship and diffusion of innovation, climate change adaptation, community and customer engagement, and sustainability. **dates:** 11-15 September 2022 **location:** Copenhagen, Denmark **www:** worldwatercongress.org/

World Habitat Day: This UN day is annually celebrated on the first Monday of October to reflect on the state of human settlements and people’s right to sufficient shelter. It also aims to remind people that they are responsible for the habitat of future generations. **dates:** 4 October 2022 **location:** worldwide **www:** urbanoctober.unhabitat.org/whd

58th ISOCARP World Planning Congress: The 58th ISOCARP Congress will convene under the theme, “From Wealth to Healthy Cities.” Participants will focus on the intersection of planning, well-being, and socioeconomic justice. **dates:** 3-7 October 2022 **location:** Brussels, Belgium **www:** brussels2022.isocarp.org/

World Cities Day 2022: The UN has designated 31 October as World Cities Day. The day is expected to promote the international community’s interest in global urbanization, push forward cooperation among countries in meeting opportunities and addressing challenges of urbanization, and contribute to sustainable urban development around the world. **dates:** 31 October 2022 **location:** worldwide **www:** www.un.org/en/observances/cities-day

UCLG 7th World Congress and Summit of Local and Regional Leaders: The World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders will convene mayors, local governments, partners, NGOs, and civil society to overcome urban challenges and co-create the solutions needed. **dates:** 10-14 October 2022 **location:** Daejeon, Republic of Korea **www:** www.uclg.org/en/media/events/uclg-7th-world-congress-and-summit-local-and-regional-leaders

UN Climate Change Conference: The next UN Climate Change Conference will include the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 27) to the UNFCCC, the 17th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 17), and the fourth meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 4). **dates:** 6-18 November 2022 **location:** Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt **www:** cop27.eg/

Smart City Expo World Congress 2022: Smart City Expo World Congress is the world’s leading summit addressing the link between urban reality and technological revolution. Corporate leaders, public representatives, entrepreneurs, experts,

and academics from all around the globe will come together to learn from each other, share experiences, talk about best practices, and open new paths for international collaboration. **dates:** 15-17 November 2022 **location:** Barcelona, Spain **www:** www.smartcityexpo.com/

2022 Effective Development Co-operation Summit: The 2022 Effective Development Co-operation Summit, which is taking place at the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, will put a spotlight on how better cooperation strengthens trust and transforms the way we work together. Organized by the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, the Summit will underscore that effective co-operation that is country owned, focused on results, involves all type of partners, is transparent and accountable, and builds trust leads to impactful partnerships and better results in countries. **dates:** 12-14 December 2022 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** www.effectivecooperation.org/hlm3

UN Biodiversity Conference: The UN Biodiversity Conference includes the 15th meeting of the COP to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the tenth meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the fourth meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing. The first part of the conference convened virtually from 11-15 October 2021. Meeting in person, the second is expected to take a final decision on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. **dates:** 5-17 December 2022 **location:** Montreal, Canada **www:** www.cbd.int/conferences/2021-2022

12th Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF12): The Forum will provide a platform for global leaders to share expertise on the global challenges we face in urban development and the innovative ways we can overcome them. WUF12 will focus on how the world can achieve the sustainable development Goals and objectives within the NUA. **dates:** 2024 **location:** Cairo, Egypt **www:** unhabitat.org/

Glossary

COP	Conference of the Parties
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
NUA	New Urban Agenda
NUF	National Urban Forum
NUP	National Urban Policy
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UN-Habitat	UN Human Settlements Programme
WUF	World Urban Forum